



# Mishawaka Communicator



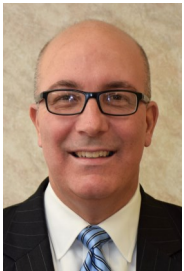
*Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life and inspiring pride in our community.*

Dave Wood, Mayor

[www.mishawaka.in.gov](http://www.mishawaka.in.gov)

February 2019

## A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood



### Are there too many apartments in Mishawaka?

We used to say that there were two seasons in Mishawaka, construction season and winter. Lately though, with advances in modern technology and a bustling economy, construction no longer relents to winter. As I write this letter in my office on the coldest day of the season so far (-8 F), private sector construction crews are busy building all over town. This is surely a great sign for our future but it can also bring some trepidation. The recent construction boom is bringing in new hospitals, shops, restaurants, manufacturing, residential housing and more which is attracting people and businesses to the Princess City. Especially encouraging is that we are seeing all types of new housing being constructed in the Princess City leading to what we think will be an uptick in population growth when the 2020 Census is taken next year. Multi-family, high-density housing projects with modern amenities are the hot projects now, especially in our downtown. As our City's landscape continues to change with these projects, one of the questions or comments that I have been getting more frequently is: *"Are there too many apartments in Mishawaka?"*

This is not a new phenomenon. We have seen similar construction booms in the past including the retail boom of the 1980s - 90s, the single-family housing boom of the 1990s - 2000s, the restaurant boom over the last twenty years and recently the healthcare and senior living boom. Construction booms are a response to the free market which is to say that our citizens are demanding a certain product, service or amenity and private developers are responding to that need by building a project to address it. Following each of the booms, questions surfaced about whether there is too much. A windshield inspection tour of the City would seem to indicate a vibrant community where there are not a lot of vacant shops, restaurants, homes, or apartments.

*(cont'd on next page)*

## Choose Healthy Snacks!

*Health Information from Saint Joseph Health System*

If one of your goals this year is to eat healthier, don't forget to look beyond meals. Snacking helps you get to your next meal without feeling overly hungry, provides nutrients you need every day and maintains energy levels throughout the day. Being overly hungry at mealtimes can lead to overeating or making poor food choices.

When choosing snacks, remember the acronym SUPER:

- S** – Simple to prepare, which makes you more likely to eat them as opposed to quicker and less nutritious options
- U** – Under 30 g carbohydrates and 300 mg sodium
- P** – Protein-rich with at least 6 - 8 g (protein helps fill you up by helping to digest foods at a slower rate)
- E** – Energizing and filling with at least 5 g of naturally occurring fat
- R** – Ready to pack and go

As a bonus, look for fiber, which helps fill you up. Aim for at least 3 g of fiber for most snacks. Whole fruits, vegetables and whole grains are great sources of fiber.

To learn more, visit [ThisCounts.org](http://ThisCounts.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb 12 Grandparents & Me  
(Battell Center)
- Feb 14 Valentine's Day  
Couple Skate  
(Merrifield Ice Rink)
- Feb 15 Winter Concert  
"Top Secret"  
(Battell Center)
- Feb 22 Mother/Son Dance  
(Battell Center)
- Feb 23 Daddy/Daughter  
Dance  
(Battell Center)
- Mar 14 Winter Concert  
"HiFi2WiFi"  
(Battell Center)
- Mar 16 Decades Dance (50's)  
(Battell Center)
- Mar 25 State of the City  
Address  
(Battell Center - 7pm)
- Apr 18 Winter Concert  
"Elephant Rescue  
Band"  
(Battell Center)

## Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Free tax prep & e-filing assistance for working families and individuals in St. Joseph County.

**CALL 2-1-1 to schedule your appointment**

## ONLINE ACCESS

- <http://mishawaka.in.gov>
- <http://facebook.com/cityofmishawaka>
- <http://mishawaka.in.gov/communicator>
- <http://mishawaka.in.gov/parksandrecreation>
- <https://twitter.com/MishawakaMayor>
- <https://instagram.com/MishawakaMayor/>

## A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood *(continued)*

Historically, more development has brought *MORE* patrons from beyond Mishawaka. This development has made Mishawaka a known destination regionally for dining, shopping, and healthcare. The current boom of apartments makes us more of a destination as a place to live as well. Everyone then benefits from the City's slow and steady strategic growth. Growth not only helps stabilize the City financially, but it also inherently provides an opportunity for greater amenities, services, and prosperity. It's similar to the old adage: "a rising tide lifts all boats."

So are there too many apartments? The simple answer is "no!" The reasons are evident. First, all of the new apartments that have been built recently are leasing up rapidly and are staying full even at premium prices. Second, private developers continue to invest millions of their own dollars to build new apartments. Investors and developers tend to be risk averse, they do not enter into such commitments lightly. Our experience has been that if they are putting millions of their own dollars at risk, they will do market studies and research necessary to get assurances that their investment will pay off. Third, there was a period of nearly two decades when there was no significant new apartment complexes built in the City leading to a shortage in the market, especially regarding apartments containing modern amenities. And lastly, there aren't many empty, vacant or abandoned apartment units no matter the type or age. In fact, a study done a couple of years ago by a local real estate firm indicated that apartment units were 98% full and that the resulting impact would be upward pressure on rent rates and pressure to build new units resulting in more construction of apartments with modern amenities.

Market trends are also coming into play here as well. Competition is good and will ultimately deliver a better product. In retail terms, this is why Kmart was going through bankruptcy while Costco was building on the north side of the City. The residential market has changed as well. A larger percentage of people today would rather rent than own. Younger generations are buying houses later in life. Older generations want to get away from the maintenance obligations associated with owning your own home. Also, more people want to live in downtowns where they are close to amenities such as parks, shops, restaurants and even work. This is especially true with students graduating from college. In many cases, including my own daughter, students are living in dorms nicer than my own home. When they graduate, they will be expecting to find similar types of housing in communities that they choose to settle in. We want that to be in Mishawaka and that means that we better have a diversity in housing stock, from affordable housing options all the way up to and including luxury apartments. Thankfully, we have a good diversity of housing options in Mishawaka and there is more being planned and built all the time.

Zoning law is such that if a project such as residential housing is proposed by a developer, there are ordinances, building codes, overlay zoning districts and guidelines in place that serve as guidance to new building development and land use. It also goes through an extensive approval process that includes multiple public meetings and hearings in front of a variety of boards, commissions and the City Council. If the project meets all the criteria and is approved, that makes it hard legally to say no to another developer that may want to build a similar project across the street. How can the City say yes to one but no to another assuming that both are similar in land use? The City shouldn't put itself in a position to pick winners and losers. Additionally, there are already services and amenities in place downtown that make it an attractive place for developers to do residential projects. The fact that city blocks are already built and in place with infrastructure like streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, electric and wastewater surrounding empty grass/mud fields makes the area an attractive place to develop from the City's perspective rather than building new infrastructure at great (taxpayer) expense through undeveloped farm fields. That makes downtown development an even better value for our citizens.

These projects could be built anywhere, and there are a lot of cities that are clamoring for new housing projects. The fact that they are choosing to build in Mishawaka is a great sign that our City is an attractive place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Yours in Mishawaka,



### 2019 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Presented by  
Mayor David A. Wood

March 25, 2019 - 7PM  
Battell Center Auditorium

### COLORING CONTEST WINNERS!

The annual coloring contest, sponsored by the Mishawaka Business Association, was judged by Mayor Wood and his family. A winner was selected in each grade level, K-6 and received a \$50.00 gift certificate to Build-A-Bear at University Park Mall.

K	Skye Grimes	Emmons
1st	Landon Brioli	Hums
2nd	Olivia Good	Mish. Catholic
3rd	Dylan Wells	Liberty
4th	Madilyn Brough	Queen of Peace
5th	Macey Vicsik	Queen of Peace
6th	Koryn Flick	Twin Branch